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COMMUNITY REVIEW

## SOUTH BOSTON

Background Information, Planning Issues and  
Preliminary Neighborhood Improvement Strategies



City of Boston  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
District Planning Program

June, 1975

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## INTRODUCTION

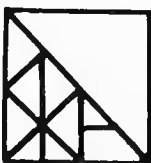
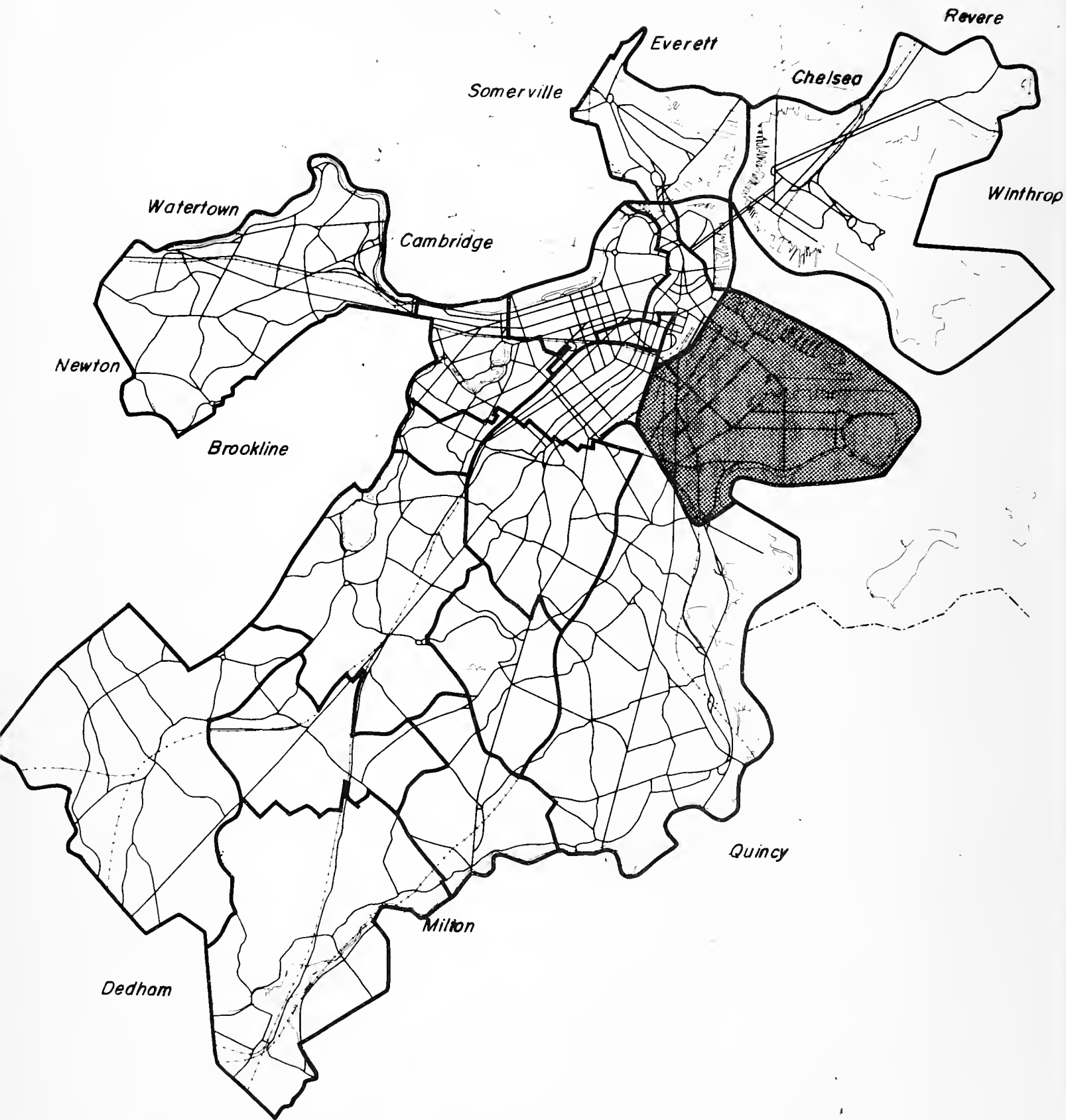
This report was prepared by the South Boston District Planners. It is a draft document and is meant to structure discussion among residents and city representatives on planning strategies and investment needs.

This report does a number of things:

First, it establishes a base of population, income and housing data as well as listing and analysis of recent past public and private investment in South Boston. This information can be used by the District Planners and others who are involved in the planning process, neighborhood residents, Little City Hall staff and other city agencies and departments.

Second, it offers an analysis of the major issues which confront the community along with recommended strategies. These strategies should form the basis of discussion for community residents for the Community Development Revenue Sharing (CDRS) and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) participation process as well as for involvement in issues which are not addressed by city expenditures such as rezoning, private development or programs funded by the state.

Third, the report recognizes that strategies are not self-fulfilling and makes recommendations for investments, both public and private, which are necessary to help carry through the recommended strategies.



SOUTH BOSTON



## A. SHORT HISTORY

South Boston was founded in 1630 as a part of Dorchester and was annexed to Boston in 1804. At that time, South Boston was a peninsula of approximately 570 acres extending north from Dorchester, dominated by two prominent hills and separated from the Boston peninsula by South Boston Bay and the Dorchester Flats.

South Boston remained basically undeveloped until the early nineteenth century, when real estate speculators purchased some land, intending to develop it as a high income residential neighborhood. In 1805 the first bridge connecting South Boston to Boston Proper was constructed, and the district's characteristic grid street pattern was laid out. Development was rather slow at first, but a number of wealthy Yankee merchants built large wooden houses for themselves along East Broadway and around Thomas Park on Telegraph Hill.

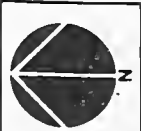
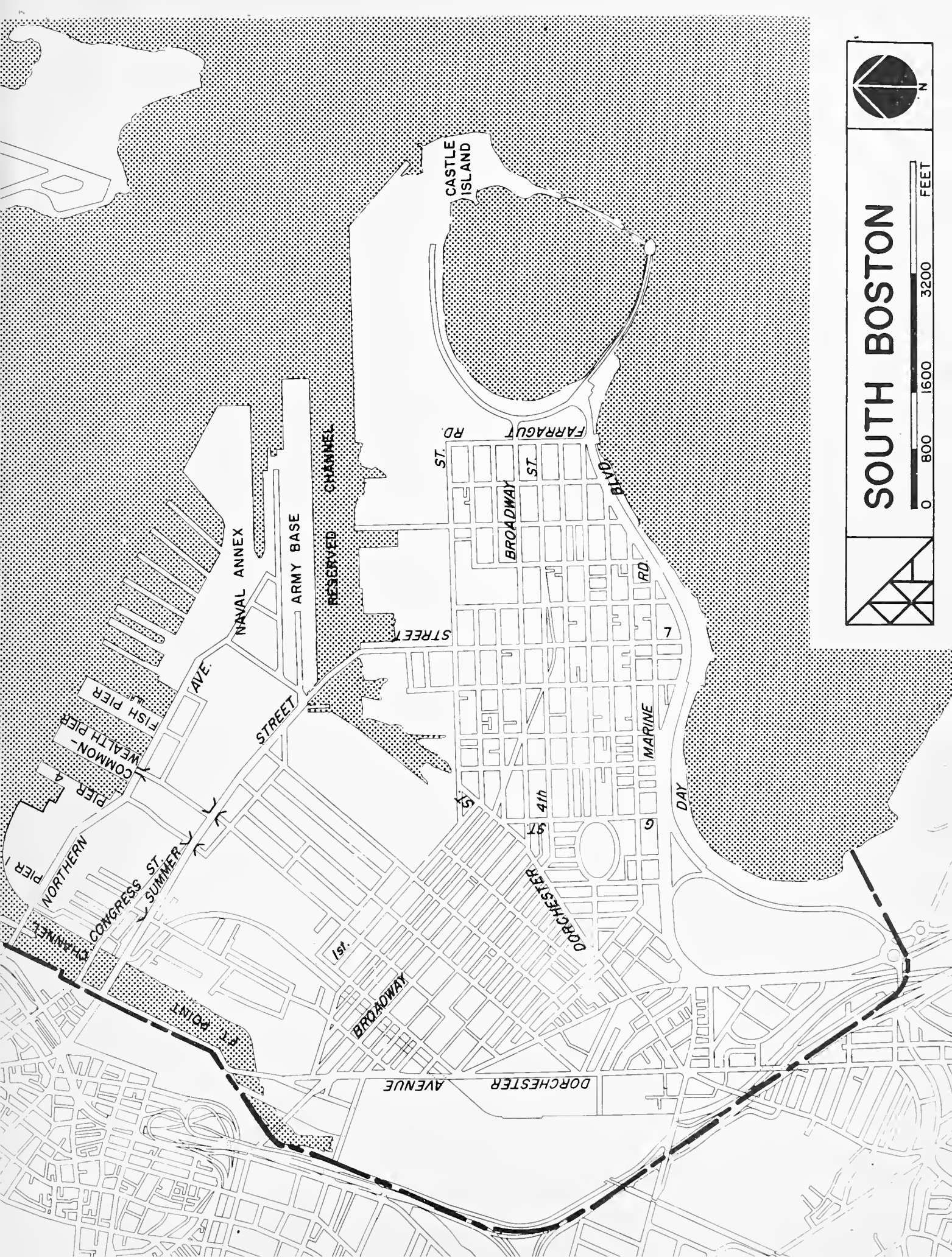
The pace of development accelerated in the 1830's as new bridges were opened and the northern marshland began to be filled for industrial development. The region of South Bay became a center for the lumber and foundry industries. As more land was created and industrial development expanded, South Boston increasingly became the home of industrial workers and their families, most of whom were Irish immigrants. These laborers settled in the area west of Dorchester Street, in frame triple-decker houses.

The Great Boston fire in 1874 brought more immigrant laborers to the already crowded western section, and as Back Bay was established as Boston's fashionable residential district, South Boston lost its last attraction as a high income neighborhood. Much of the peninsula was developed during the 1870's and 1880's with simple wooden or brick row houses and detached three-family dwellings. The extension of streetcar service to the southern and eastern shores in 1890 led to the completion of the community's residential development. At the end of the nineteenth century other immigrant groups, Lithuanians, Poles and Italians, began to settle in the area west of Dorchester Street; and many of the Irish, already established in the community, crossed Dorchester Street to move into the eastern section.

The twentieth century has brought a steady increase of activity to the northern, non-residential section of South Boston. Industrial and warehousing operations have grown in size and number; and the rail-road yards, once so vitally important, have fallen into disuse as trucking and containerized shipping have become the primary means of transporting goods and materials. This growth was for the most part unplanned and uncontrolled and resulted in a band of mixed residential and industrial land along the northern boundary of the South Boston residential neighborhood and a high incidence of truck traffic on residential streets.

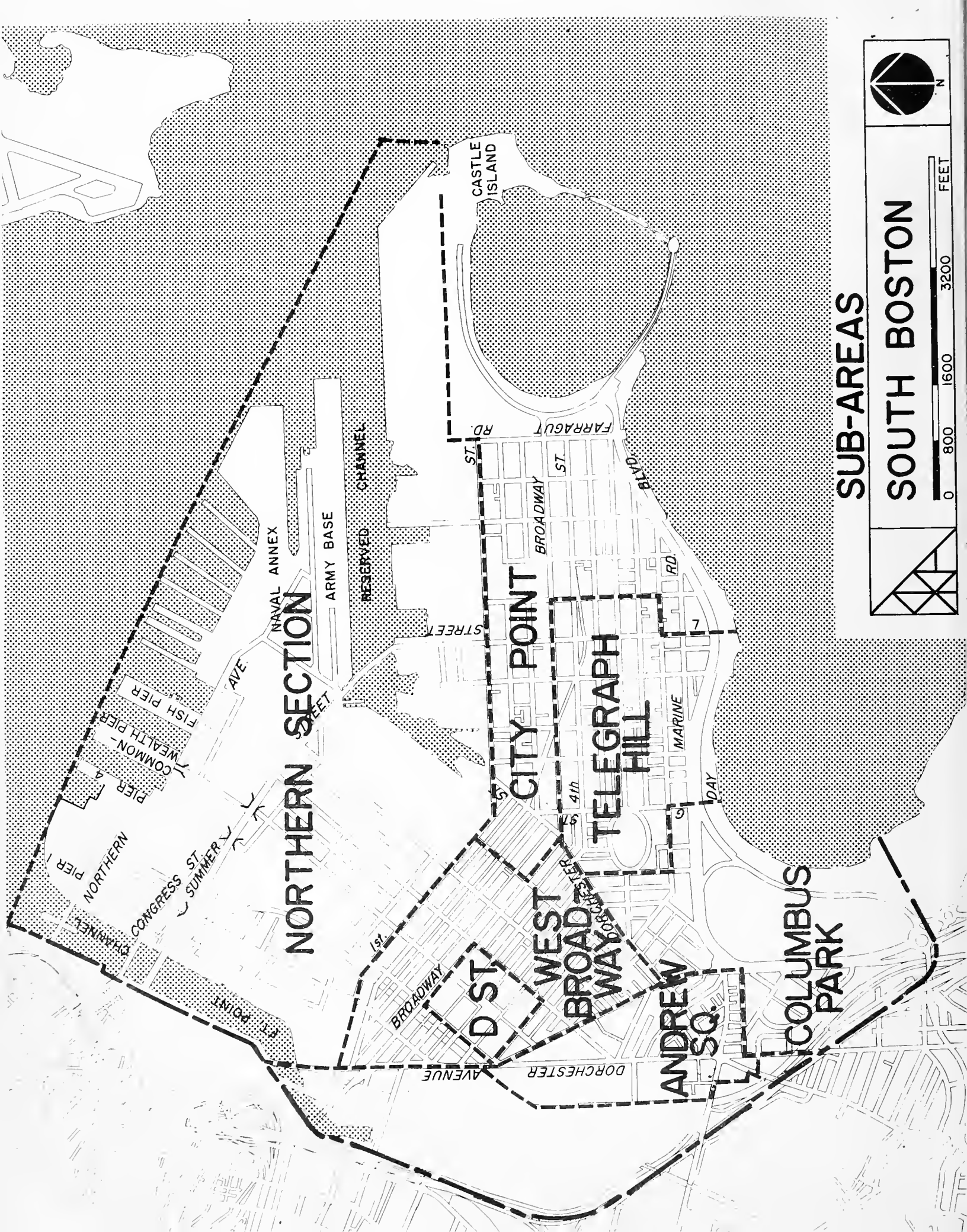
South Boston lost almost a third of its population between 1950 and 1970, and recent years have brought an increasing turnover and change in the population of this formerly extremely stable community. Greatest losses have occurred in the 0-9 years age category and in the sections most heavily affected by industrial encroachment and increasing truck traffic, which are characterized by deteriorated and abandoned housing. The elderly population has increased in South Boston; apparently many former South Boston residents have returned to move into the two elderly housing projects built in the last fifteen years. The Boston Housing Authority has also built three low income housing projects in South Boston, the Old Harbor or Mary McCormack Project in 1938, the Old Colony Project in 1941, and the D Street Project in 1949. Although the majority of South Boston's population has been Irish since the early nineteenth century, this majority has been decreasing, while numbers of Eastern Europeans, French Canadians and Italians are growing. The neighborhood has continued its traditional character of a predominantly white middle income neighborhood through the present day.





# SOUTH BOSTON





SUB-AREAS

SOUTH BOSTON



## B. EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

Information on population and housing in this report was derived from the 1960 and 1970 U.S. Census. Seven sub-areas of South Boston have been designated for further analysis: City Point (1970 Census tracts 601, 602, and 605), Telegraph Hill (603 and 604), Columbus Park (610 and 611), Andrew Square (612 and 613), West Broadway (606, 608, 609 and 614), D Street (607), and the Northern Section.

### CITY POINT

City Point is located in the eastern section of South Boston and includes Independence Park, the Christopher Lee Playground, Marine Park, Pleasure Bay and Castle Island. A portion of the commercial center which serves the entire district is located along Broadway in City Point, and local neighborhood commercial establishments are scattered on corners of residential streets throughout the area. The Sea Land containerport and other port activity occupy filled land north of Marine Park and Pleasure Bay, and several heavy industrial uses are located along First Street. Aside from the Lee Playground, there is no buffer or definite boundary separating industrial land from the residential neighborhood, and there is evidence of housing deterioration along the northern edge of the area.

There are some large single and two-family detached houses along East Broadway and in the vicinity of Marine Park and the waterfront; the remainder are either wooden triple-deckers or brick or frame row houses. Although most of the housing is in good or fair condition, 1,622 units required over \$1,000 fix-up in 1973. More than 25% of the units in City Point are owner-occupied; this figure is slightly greater than the district average. The majority of residential structures in the area contain three dwelling units, and so most have resident owners. The degree of mobility in the area is surprisingly high, however; only 37.2% of the area's 1970 population had lived in the same house for five or more years, compared with the district-wide figure of 52.7% and 50% for the city as a whole. The area experienced a moderate 7.5% loss of population between 1960 and 1970. Categories of young adults and elderly increased slightly during the period, while there was a significant loss of over 21% in the population of children under 10. Incomes in City Point are higher than in most other areas of South Boston. The 1970 median family income for the area was \$8,663-10,183, with a relatively low percentage (18%) of the area's families earning less than \$5,000.

### TELEGRAPH HILL

Telegraph Hill is located in the eastern section of South Boston and is bounded by Broadway, Old Harbor Street, M Street, and the L Street Beach. Thomas Park and the South Boston High School atop

Dorchester Heights are visually dominant features. The area also includes a portion of the district's commercial area along Broadway and scattered local neighborhood stores on street corners. Thomas Park is surrounded by single and two-family detached houses, some of the most architecturally notable buildings in the district. From this point the residential streets slope downward, lined with low-rise brick or frame row houses, with some frame triple-deckers near the L Street Beach. The majority of houses in the area are in good condition and the rest in fair condition. Fewer than a quarter of the dwelling units required fix-up exceeding \$1,000 in 1973. The area shows strong signs of residential stability, with almost 35% of its dwelling units owner-occupied and 61.5% of its population who have lived in the same house for five or more years. The area experienced a moderate 7.7% population loss between 1960 and 1970. It lost over 28% of its children under 10 and gained 3% in youth aged 10-19, while the elderly population increased almost 18%. Telegraph Hill has some of the highest incomes in South Boston; the median family income was \$10,496-11,207, and only 12.6% of the area's families had incomes under \$5,000 in 1970.

#### COLUMBUS PARK

Columbus Park is in the southern section of South Boston, bounded by Old Harbor Street, Dorchester Street, Old Colony Avenue, William Devine Way, Dorchester Avenue, the Expressway, and Carson Beach. Carson Beach and Columbus Park itself, a large active recreation field, are dominant features of the area. The neighborhood includes two housing projects, the Mary McCormack (Old Harbor) and the Old Colony housing projects, and a relatively small amount of private housing. The McCormack housing project, built in 1938, is fairly well-maintained, and has a good deal of grass and open space. The design of the project, which is quite pleasant, includes 2-4 family and a few single family brick structures. The Old Colony is neither as well-designed nor as pleasant but is fairly well-maintained. Most of the area's private houses are frame triple-deckers; the majority are in fair condition, and the rest are in good condition. 361 units required fix-up exceeding \$1,000 in 1973. The stability of the area is demonstrated by the fact that over 64% of its residents have lived in the same house for five or more years. Columbus Park lost 30% of its population between 1960 and 1970. Greatest losses occurred in categories of young children and adults, while the elderly population increased over 61% in the same period. The area's median family income is low (\$6,319-6,659), and about 41% of the families in the area have incomes under \$5,000.

#### ANDREW SQUARE

Andrew Square is in the western part of South Boston, bounded by Dorchester Avenue, Old Colony Avenue and William Devine Way. It has a small commercial center, which is a mixture of stores which

serve the local neighborhood and stores which serve and supply other businesses and industries. An MBTA transit station is also located in this center. The dominant housing type is the frame triple-decker, complemented by some single and two-family houses. The majority of the area's housing stock is in fair condition, with some structures in poor condition and others in good condition. 484 units (over half of the area total) required fix-up over \$1,000 in 1973. Approximately a fourth of the area's dwelling units are owner-occupied and about 62% of the area's residents have lived in the same house for five or more years. Two kinds of conversions have been taking place in the area, from two-family houses to single family dwellings, and from large flats to smaller apartments. These conversions are evidence of an increasing and changing demand for housing in the area, which may be generated in part by the new campus of the University of Massachusetts at nearby Columbia Point. Andrew Square's population increased slightly by 3.4% between 1960 and 1970. There were gains in all age categories except 0-9 years, which decreased 18.5%. The area experienced a great increase of 30.5% in the elderly category. The area's median family income is rather low (\$7,558-7,694), and almost 30% of its families earn incomes under \$5,000.

#### WEST BROADWAY

West Broadway is in the western section of South Boston. It surrounds the D Street housing project and is bounded roughly by West First Street, Dorchester Avenue, Old Colony Avenue, Dorchester Street, West Broadway and F Street. The area includes a major portion of South Boston's central business district, which runs along Broadway. A number of industrial establishments and commercial warehouses are located along West First and West Second Streets and in the north-western corner of the area. The lack of a definite boundary or buffer to separate the residential neighborhood from these uses has resulted in a section of mixed use along the northern edge of the area. Heavy truck traffic generated by these warehouses and industries creates hazard, pollution and congestion on residential streets. The rowhouse, of either brick or wooden frame, is the dominant housing type in the area. Although the bulk of residential structures are in fair condition, many are in poor condition and few are in good condition. 1,125 units (over half of the area's housing stock) required fix-up in excess of \$1,000 in 1973. There is occasional evidence of new investment in the area, but also frequent signs of abandonment and extreme deterioration. There are many vacant lots in the area, and most of these have become hazardous and unsightly repositories of debris or wrecked cars. The cost of rehabilitating most of the housing in the area is beyond the means of landlords, and the rent they would have to charge to cover improvement costs would be beyond the means of their tenants. About 28% of the area's housing units are owner-occupied, and about 53% of the area's residents have lived in the same house for five or more years. The West Broadway area lost over a fourth of its



population between 1960 and 1970, with heavy losses in all age categories. The area's median family income (\$7,100-9,316) is rather low, and close to 25% of the area's families earn less than \$5,000. There is a good deal of shuffling of population between the D Street project and the immediately adjacent parts of the West Broadway neighborhood. Generally, this section is undergoing rapid transition from a low level stable to a downward transitional neighborhood, being blighted by both the D Street housing project and the surrounding industry, which continues to encroach on the residential neighborhood.

#### D STREET

D Street, which is bounded by B Street, D Street, West Broadway and West Seventh Street, is entirely occupied by a poorly designed and poorly maintained low income housing project. The project is overcrowded and badly in need of upgrading. The immediate area is severely lacking usable open space and public and private services and facilities. D Street experienced a net population loss of 5% between 1960 and 1970. The area lost almost 24% of its young childhood population and close to 30% of its young adults. During the same period, the area gained almost 30% in the 10-19 age category and experienced more moderate gains in adult and elderly population. The median family income is low, \$4,590, and over 57% of the families in D Street earn less than \$5,000. Vandalism and crime and the fear that they generate are major problems in D Street. The project is a blighting influence on the surrounding residential and commercial areas and is itself being blighted by nearby industrial development and truck traffic.

#### NORTHERN SECTION

The Northern Section of South Boston is a large expanse of filled land extending northward from East and West First Street to the Fort Point Channel and Boston Harbor. Land in the northern section is used primarily for industrial, warehousing and distribution, institutional and commercial purposes. Development is of relatively low density, with large areas of vacant and underutilized land. The Northern Section is distinct from the rest of South Boston in terms of land use and density; but the East/West First Street truck route which divides them is not a definite boundary and non-residential uses are mixed into the residential neighborhood. The Summer Street, Congress Street and Northern Avenue bridges over Fort Point Channel provide access to the Northern Section from downtown Boston and points farther north. Access from the south is less direct, and many trucks use residential streets to get into the area. The great amount of under-developed land in the area in close proximity to downtown and the construction activity across

the Fort Point Channel in the South Station vicinity are creating development pressure in the Northern Section. The vast majority of land in the Northern Section is in the ownership of three private corporations (Athanas, Town & Cities, and Gillette), the Massachusetts Port Authority, and the United States Government. Two major commercial and residential developments have begun to be planned by private investors for land near the Fort Point Channel. The recently closed South Boston Naval Base Annex is being planned by the City for industrial reuse.

# Comparative Statistics - South Boston

## 1970 U.S. Census Data

<u>Population</u>	<u>City Point (601,602, 605)</u>	<u>Telegraph Hill (603,604)</u>	<u>Columbus Park (610,611)</u>	<u>Andrew Square (612,613)</u>
Total 1970	11,378	10,144	5,750	2,222
%Change from '60	-7.5%	-7.7%	-30.0%	+3.4%
Total Black 1970	21	10	155	18
Total Black 1960	24	16	2	0
Aged 0-9 yrs. - 1970	1,822	1,406	1,111	325
%Change from '60	-21.3%	-28.3%	-35.2%	-18.5%
Aged 10-19 yrs. - 1970	1,812	1,709	1,130	385
%Change from '60	-5.6%	+3.0%	-12.3%	+7.5%
Aged 20-34 yrs. - 1970	2,349	1,800	870	372
%Change from '60	+2.1%	-10.0%	-32.2%	+8.8%
Aged 35-64 yrs. - 1970	3,959	3,586	1,590	819
%Change from '60	-9.7%	-9.7%	-27.2%	+1.9%
Aged 65 yrs. & over 1970	1,436	1,643	1,049	321
%Change from '60	+4.1%	+17.7%	+16.4%	+30.5%
<u>Income</u>				
Median Family	\$ 8,663- 10,183	\$10,496- 11,207	\$6,319- 6,659	\$7,558- 7,694
% Families under \$5,000	18.0%	12.6%	41.1%	29.2%
<u>Housing</u>				
Total Dwelling Units	4,216	3,554	2,248	913
Units Needing Fix-up in excess of \$1,000	1,622	817	361	484
%Owner Occupied Units	27.0%	34.8%	7.8%	24.2%
Market Condition	Strong-Weak	Stable	Stable	Moderate
Mobility of Residents- Residence over 5 Years	37.2%	61.5%	64.3%	62.0%



# Comparative Statistics - South Boston

## 1970 U.S. Census Data

<u>Population</u>	<u>West Broadway (606,608, 609,614)</u>	<u>D Street (607)</u>	<u>South Boston District</u>	<u>City Of Boston</u>
Total 1970	5,455	3,539	38,488	641,071
%Change from '60	-26.4%	-5.0%	-10.4%	-8.1%
Total Black 1970	12	173	389	104,206
Total Black 1960	231	61	357	63,165
Aged 0-9 yrs. - 1970	842	1,062	6,568	101,634
%Change from '60	-39.2%	-23.9%	-28.4%	-15.8%
Aged 10-19 yrs. - 1970	1,043	933	7,012	112,122
%Change from '60	-18.7%	+29.9%	-3.0%	+9.2%
Aged 20-34 yrs. - 1970	917	456	6,764	156,497
%Change from '60	-30.3%	-29.6%	-14.3%	+9.2%
Aged 35-64 yrs. - 1970	1,930	799	12,683	189,059
%Change from '60	-24.7%	+17.2%	-13.1%	-22.8%
Aged 65 yrs. & Over 1970	723	289	5,461	81,759
%Change from '60	-16.7%	+2.1%	+7.7%	-4.5%
<u>Income</u>				
Median Family	\$7,100- 9,316	\$4,590	\$ 4,590- 11,207	\$ 9,133
% Families under \$5,000	24.5%	57.1%	24.9%	21.8%
<u>Housing</u>				
Total Dwelling Units	2,235	1,091	14,257	232,856
Units Needing Fix-up over \$1,000	1,125	1,091	5,500	67,102
%Owner Occupied Units	28.3%	0	23.9%	27.0%
Market Condition	Weak	N/A	Stable-Weak	Stable
Mobility of Residents Residence over 5 Years	53.1%	53.3%	52.7%	50%

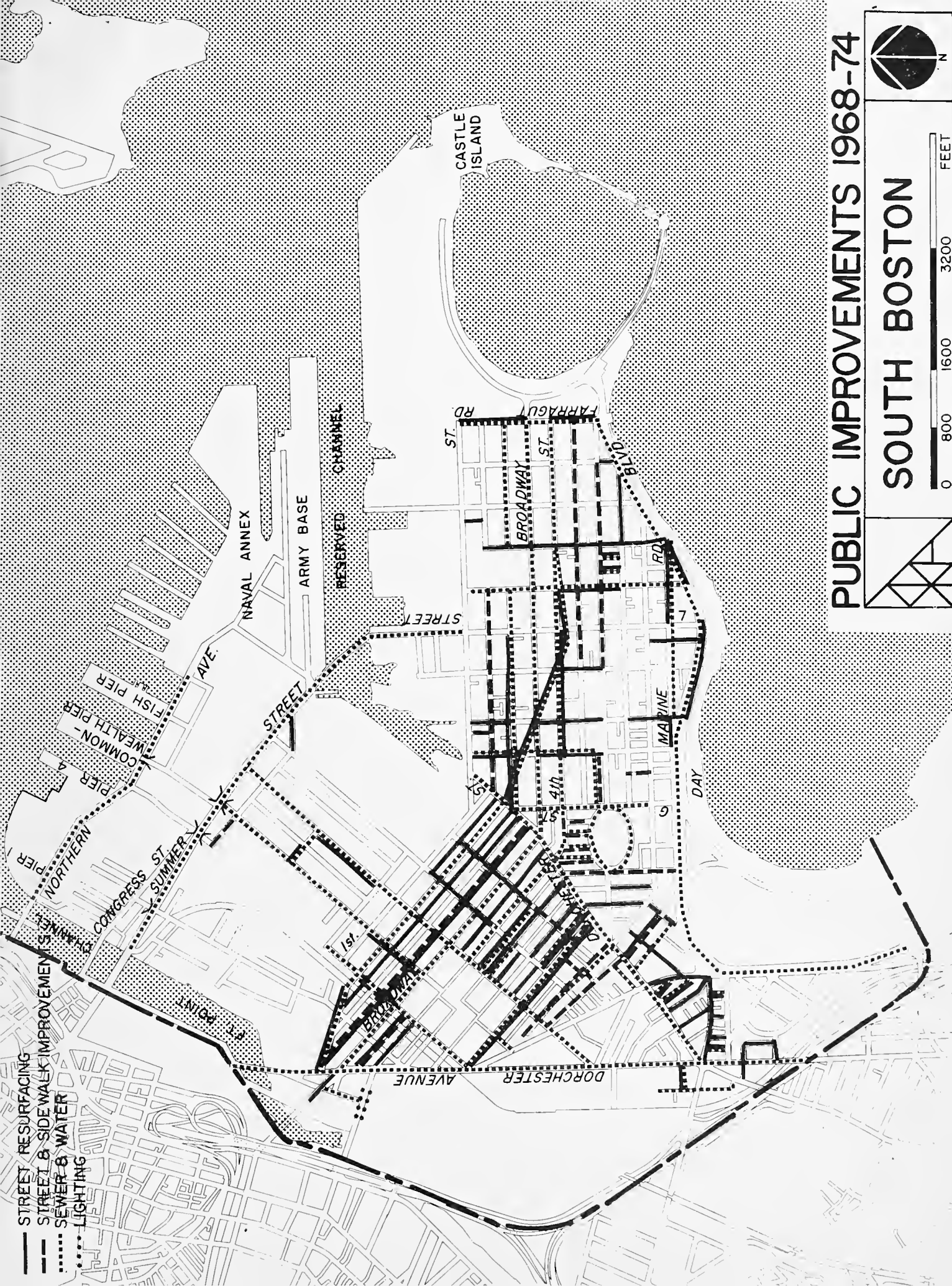
### C. PAST PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Aside from the establishment of three units of BHA leased housing and the subsidization of the construction of the Bay Towers 236 housing development by the Federal Government (152 units), past public investment in South Boston has been in the form of public works improvements and the construction and improvement of public facilities, parks and recreation facilities. Close to \$3,000,000 was spent between 1968 and 1974 on street and sidewalk improvements, replacement of sewer and water lines, and installation of street lights. The city invested over \$1.5 million to rehabilitate the L Street Bath House and High School Annex and \$250,000 in the South Boston Health Center. Close to \$5 million was spent on construction of the new Tynan Elementary School. Over \$1 million was spent on improvements to parks and recreational facilities, including the B Street/West Third Playground, Columbus Park, Lee Playground, Father Buckley Playground, Thomas Park, the L Street Bathing Beach, and the Sweeney Play Area.

### PAST PRIVATE INVESTMENT

A review of building permits for construction activity in excess of \$10,000 from 1970-74 shows that there has been commercial, residential, industrial, and institutional investment in South Boston. The majority of this investment has been in commercial buildings. There has been some rehabilitation and construction of new commercial buildings along Dorchester Avenue, near Andrew Square, and along West Broadway. The bulk of commercial investment, however, has been made in the northern section of South Boston, concentrated along West First Street, Northern Avenue and the Fort Point Channel. Aside from some residential conversions in the vicinity of Andrew Square, the limited amount of residential investment which appears in the building permits showing improvements of over \$10,000 was made in the City Point and Telegraph Hill areas. In addition, some industrial rehabilitation occurred along Northern Avenue and East First Street. Other investment evident from the building permits is rehabilitation of a medical facility on land owned by the Navy on Summer Street.

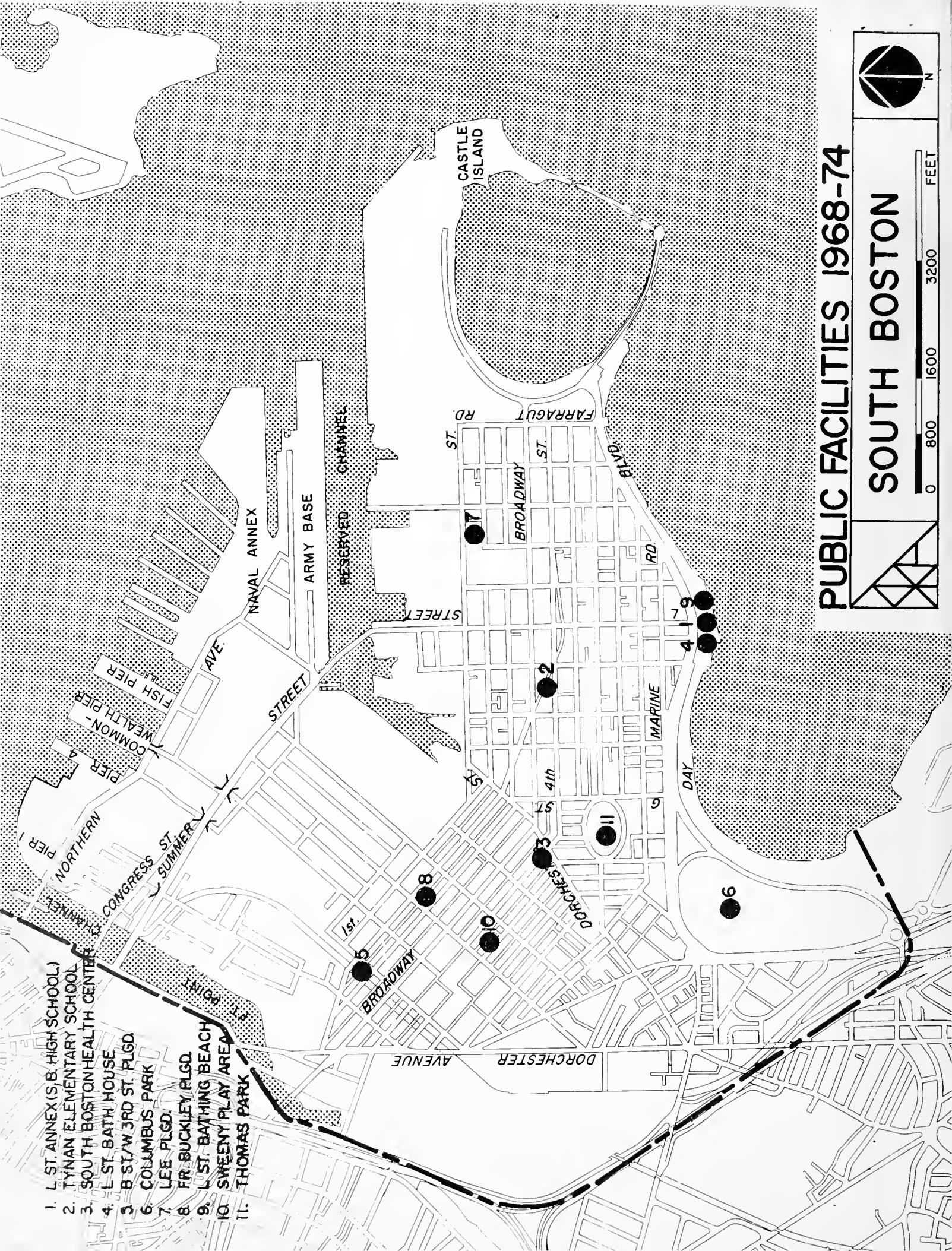
- STREET RESURFACING
- - - STREET & SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS
- ..... SEWER & WATER
- ..... LIGHTING



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS 1968-74

SOUTH BOSTON





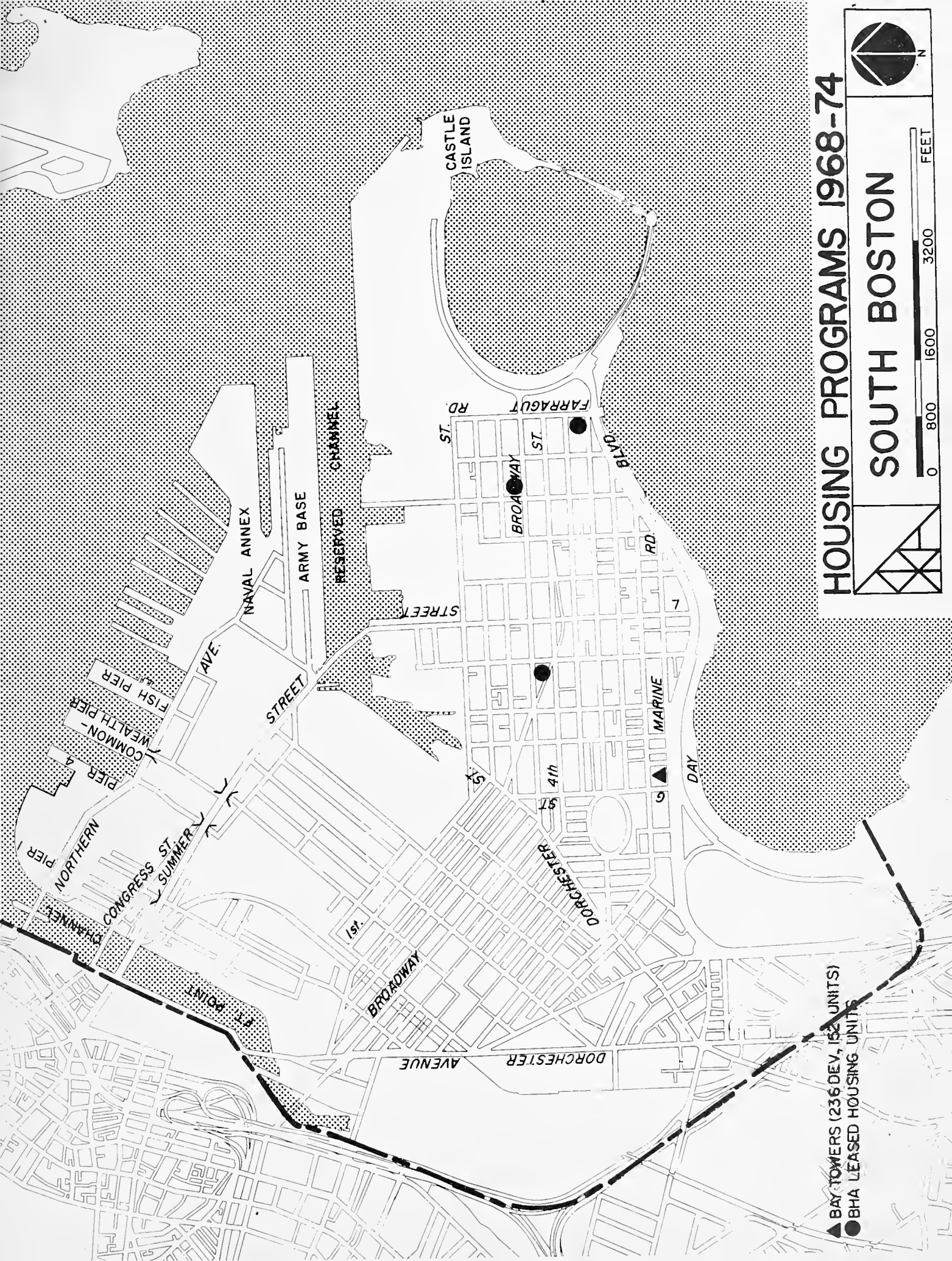
1. L ST ANNEX (S.B. HIGH SCHOOL)
2. TYNAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
3. SOUTH BOSTON HEALTH CENTER
4. L ST BATH HOUSE
5. B ST/W 3RD ST. PLGD.
6. COLUMBUS PARK
7. LEE PLGD.
8. FR. BUCKLEY PLGD.
9. L ST BATHING BEACH
10. SWEENEY PLAY AREA
11. THOMAS PARK

PUBLIC FACILITIES 1968-74

SOUTH BOSTON



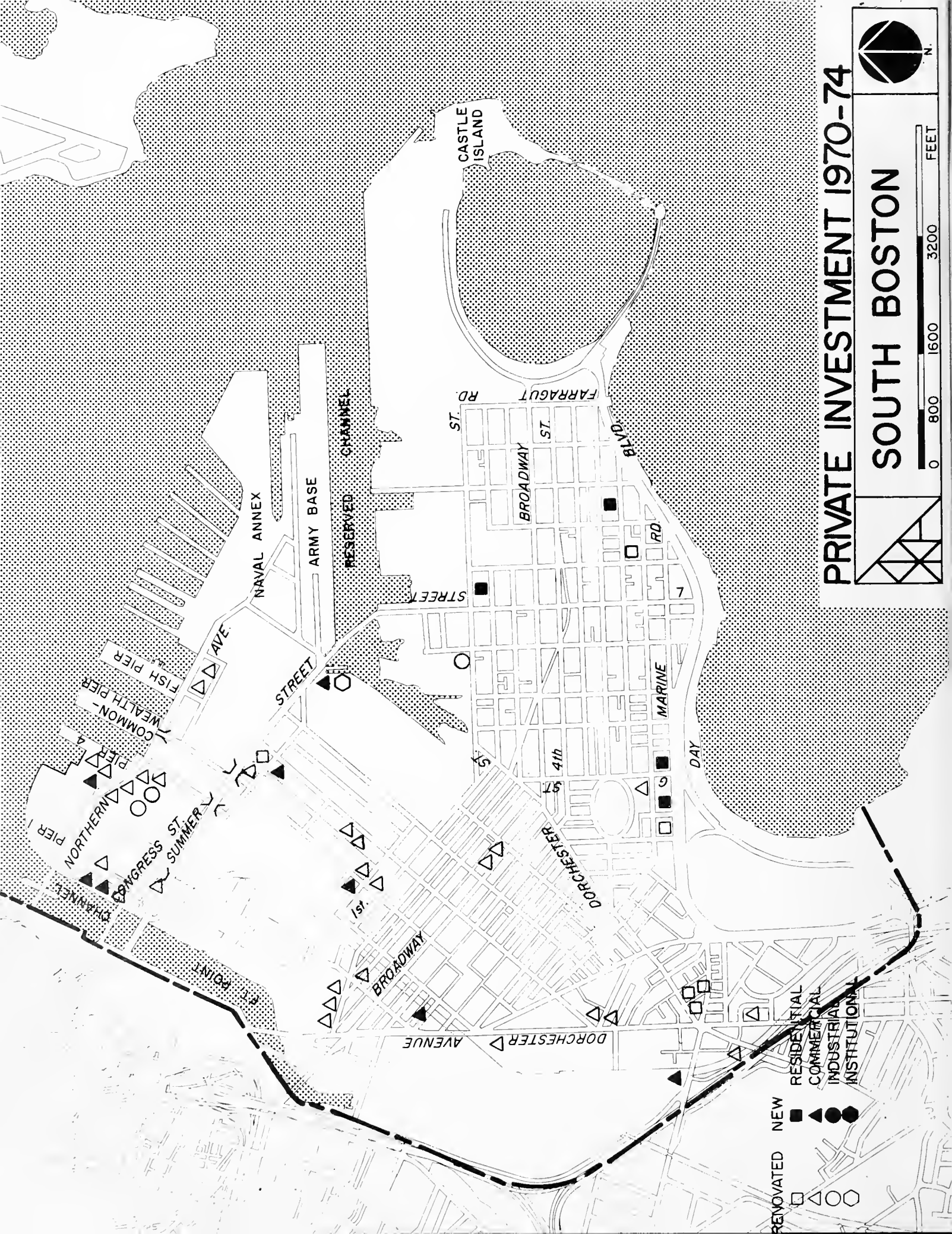




# HOUSING PROGRAMS 1968-74

## SOUTH BOSTON

▲ BAY TOWERS (236 DEV, 152 UNITS)  
● BHA LEASED HOUSING UNITS



# PRIVATE INVESTMENT 1970-74

## SOUTH BOSTON



- RENOVATED
- NEW
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL

## D. ISSUES AND PRELIMINARY STRATEGIES

Five major categories of issues have been identified for discussion: residential stability, incompatible land use, transportation problems, commercial vitality, and vacant and underused land. These issues are described separately for the purpose of clarity in presenting strategies and investment needs. They are all, however, related to the critical issues of the stability of the South Boston residential neighborhood.

### 1. RESIDENTIAL STABILITY

#### Issue

South Boston has long been one of the city's stablest residential neighborhoods with a strong sense of community rooted in the district's physical separation from the rest of the city, its fine stock of parks and beaches, and its long traditions. During the last twenty years, however, there has been turnover and change in population, and the community's stability has begun to show signs of erosion. The district's population has been decreasing. Families with young children have been moving out of the neighborhood in large numbers while the elderly population has been increasing. Over 90% of South Boston's housing stock was built before 1939, most of it much earlier. Many of these older houses, even ones which have been well-maintained on a regular basis require some major reinvestment now and present special maintainance problems for residents. At the same time, costs of rehabilitation and maintenance have risen so high that in order to afford to make necessary repairs, owners would have to raise their rents and existing tenants might be forced out. Home improvement loans are difficult to obtain in those areas where new investment is most needed.

The lack of a definite boundary and buffer to separate industrial and residential uses has created special problems along the northern edge of the community. A band of mixed uses exists along First and Second Streets in both the eastern and western sections of the district. These areas suffer the impact of heavy truck traffic generated by industrial uses and exhibit signs of housing deterioration and even some abandonment.

The West Broadway area has additional problems. This area is affected not only by industrial encroachment and truck traffic on residential streets, but also by the deteriorated and overcrowded D Street housing project. Evidence of deterioration and abandonment are frequent in the area. Some abandoned buildings are in extremely bad condition and susceptible to vandalism and fires, which in turn threaten other houses in the vicinity. The many vacant lots in the area, filled with debris or wrecked cars, are safety hazards and highly visible symbols of neglect, which discourage reinvestment. Housing in the area has been steadily deteriorating because of overcrowding and frequent turnover of residents whose low incomes have prevented them from making the necessary repairs to their property.

## Strategy

A concentrated system of public investment is required to stimulate private investment in residential South Boston and restore the neighborhood's stability. The Housing Improvement Program, which offers a cash rebate incentive and technical assistance to resident owners wishing to rehabilitate their property, is the first step in preserving the housing stock of South Boston. This program should work well in those areas where housing is basically sound and incomes are high enough to afford the required investment.

In other areas, however, notably West Broadway, where housing deterioration is pronounced, incomes are low and home improvement loans are difficult to obtain, more extensive rehabilitation assistance is necessary. Some funds have been set aside for rehabilitation work on Old Colony Housing Project in 1975, but major additional investment is needed to improve the public housing and to increase maintenance and security in the projects.

Buildings outside the housing projects which cannot be feasibly rehabilitated should be demolished, and vacant lots should be cleaned up, graded and maintained. The 1975 program includes funds for building demolition; this program should be expanded and the procedure for getting buildings demolished streamlined. The vacant lot program should also be expanded and targeted for maximum impact.

Capital investments in public facilities, public works, and parks and recreation facilities scheduled for 1975 should help to restore resident confidence and stimulate private investment. Additional capital expenditures are necessary including residential street improvements, street lights, tree planting, additional funding for the community center, and development of new open space and recreational facilities in the West Broadway area.

Zoning and the policy for granting variances and conditional use requests should be reviewed and modified as necessary in order to control land use mix and buildings conversions in the future. The city should meet with local banks and lending institutions to see what can be done to increase availability of mortgage and home improvement money and stimulate investment in the community. By identifying housing needs, funding programs and suitable development sites, the city can encourage appropriate new residential development in South Boston.

## 2. INCOMPATIBLE LAND USE

### Issue

The lack of a definite boundary or buffer to separate industrial and warehousing uses from the residential neighborhood has resulted in a band of mixed use along First and Second Streets.



Industrial and warehousing operations and the truck traffic which they generate produce problems of safety, noise and air pollution for residents and have contributed to the deterioration and instability of adjacent residential areas.

### Strategy

Existing zoning should be reviewed and modified to prevent mixture of these incompatible land uses in the future. Through its policy of granting variances and conditional uses and other discretionary review powers, such as design and environmental review, the city should continue its policies of preventing further non-compatible development in residential areas and, to the extent possible, lessen the negative impact of industry in existing mixed use areas.

## 3. TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

### Issue

Because of inadequate access to the industrial and warehousing operations in the Northern Section, trucks are currently using residential streets. The First Street truck route was recently established to address the problem but has been successful to only a limited degree. Traffic on the truck route itself is frequently held up by trucks which are double parked or unloading. Enforcing the truck route and preventing trucks from using other streets has been a problem; but even if truck traffic could be confined to using the truck route, trucks would still be using B and C Streets, which are primarily local streets themselves.

The East/West truck route, furthermore, does little to accommodate the need for trucks to travel north and south. Truck traffic moving between the Northern Section and the turnpike or the Southeast Expressway currently travels through the western part of the residential neighborhood. Movement between the industrial area and downtown or points farther north is less of a problem, as this traffic is likely to use one of the three bridges which cross the Fort Point Channel. Two of these bridges are in bad repair and have restrictive weight limits. Parked and unloading trucks on Summer Street cause hazards and delay for trucks as well as for South Boston residents trying to drive to downtown.

### Strategy

Although an intensified enforcement effort could help to alleviate problems to some extent, trucks will continue to use residential streets until a safe and convenient truck route which completely bypasses the residential neighborhood is established. The city should make necessary modifications to the existing truck route and continue ongoing review of trucking

needs and planning and design of the Seaport Access Road. The Northern Avenue bridge is currently being repaired, but will be realigned and replaced in the future. The Summer Street railroad bridge, the Summer Street bridge over the Fort Point Channel, the West Fourth Street bridge, the Broadway bridge, and the Dorchester Avenue bridge (connecting South Boston to Dorchester) all require repairs.

#### 4. COMMERCIAL VITALITY

##### Issues

Like its housing stock, the commercial areas in South Boston are old and in need of substantial investment of private and public monies to bring it up to a level of attractiveness and safety that will make them pleasant and profitable assets to the South Boston community. The most obvious problems are lack of easy access, including traffic congestion, lack of convenient parking spaces, difficult pedestrian crossings, and insufficient public transit. Lack of coordination among store owners along Broadway has given the shopping areas a cluttered, disjointed look that is unattractive. Insufficient street lighting has led to a fear of break-ins, and this in turn has resulted in the installation of bars and gratings that further reduce the attractiveness of the area. Even with the gratings and other security precautions there is a strong desire for the more intensive type of police protection that could only be provided by foot patrolmen.

The small commercial center at Andrew Square has not developed as fully as it might and a study is needed to determine what the full potential of this area is and how it can be achieved.

##### Strategy

The city's strategies for the improvement of local commercial districts call for coordinated public and private activity and investment. To achieve this, the city should encourage and strengthen local business groups and work with them in planning and paying for needed improvements. The new parking lot to be constructed on Broadway represents a major city commitment to the future of South Boston's main shopping area. Other signs of the city's involvement will be new street lights and street trees in the Broadway shopping area.

Partly as a result of the impetus created by the proposed new city investment, 30 local merchants have revived the South Boston Businessmen's Association. The city will work with this group, and local residents in planning and funding additional improvements to the commercial area. Most of these improvements will be designed to increase the accessibility, safety and attractiveness of South Boston's shopping areas.

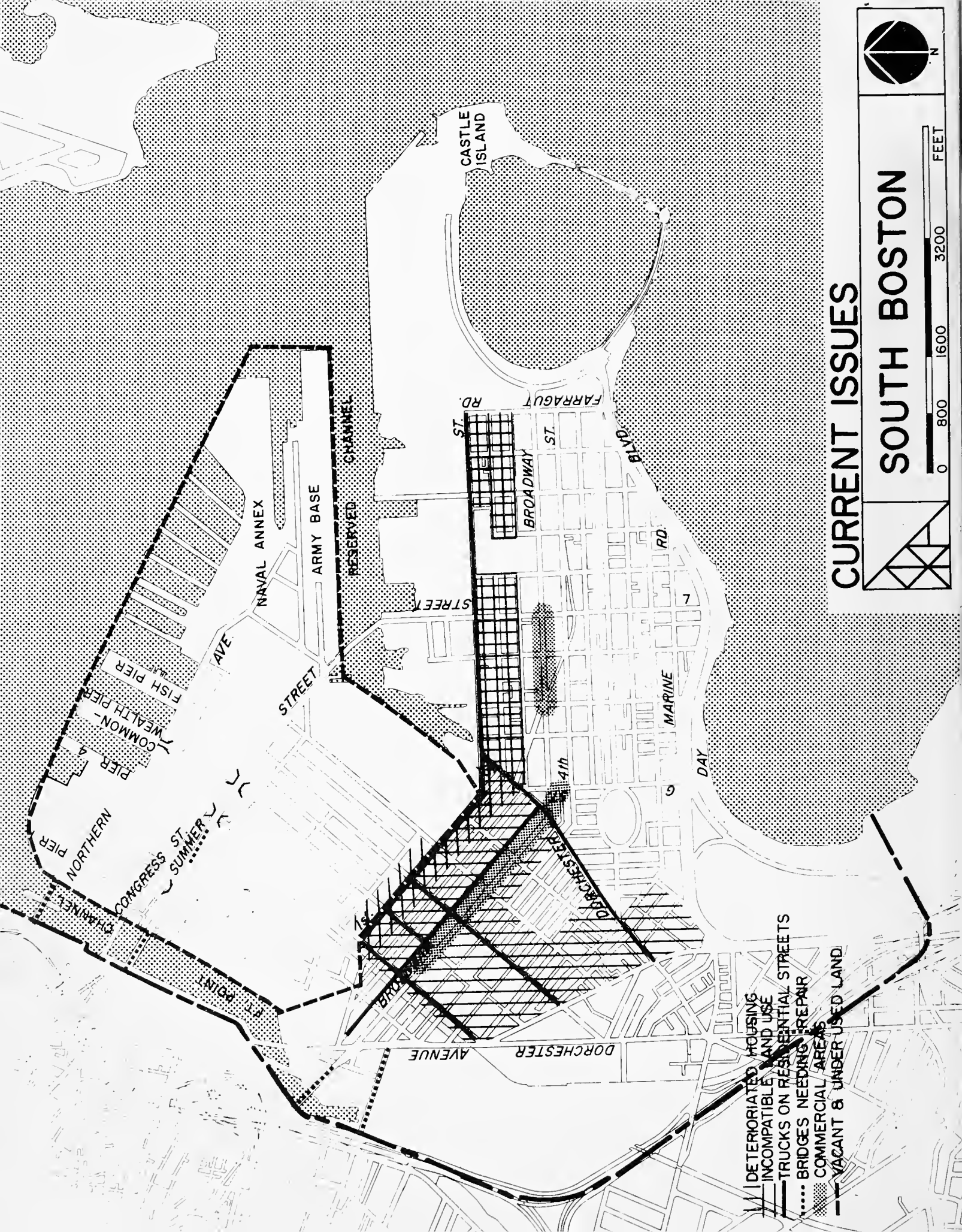
## 5. VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND

### Issue

South Boston has a large amount of vacant land and land that is greatly underutilized. The vast majority of this land is located in the northern, industrial section, but vacant residential land exists, especially in the westernmost sections. In the industrial areas the vacant land represents lost tax base for the city and lost job possibilities for South Boston residents. In the residential areas, the vacant lots are a blight on their neighbors, and represent potential for viable reuses, such as new one and two family housing, open space and recreation. It is not enough simply to come up with new uses for these areas. The uses must not create new problems for the residential community.

### Strategy

The strategy for dealing with vacant land is to make it easier for potential developers to find out about suitable sites, to determine what kinds of uses are appropriate, and what kind of public facilities and services can be made available.



# CURRENT ISSUES

## SOUTH BOSTON



- DIAGONAL LINE PATTERN: DETERIORATED HOUSING
- CROSS-HATCH PATTERN: INCOMPATIBLE LAND USE
- SOLID LINE: TRUCKS ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS
- DOTTED LINE: BRIDGES NEEDING REPAIR
- STIPPLED PATTERN: COMMERCIAL AREAS
- DASHED LINE: VACANT & UNDER-USED LAND

## E. 1975 INVESTMENT PROGRAM

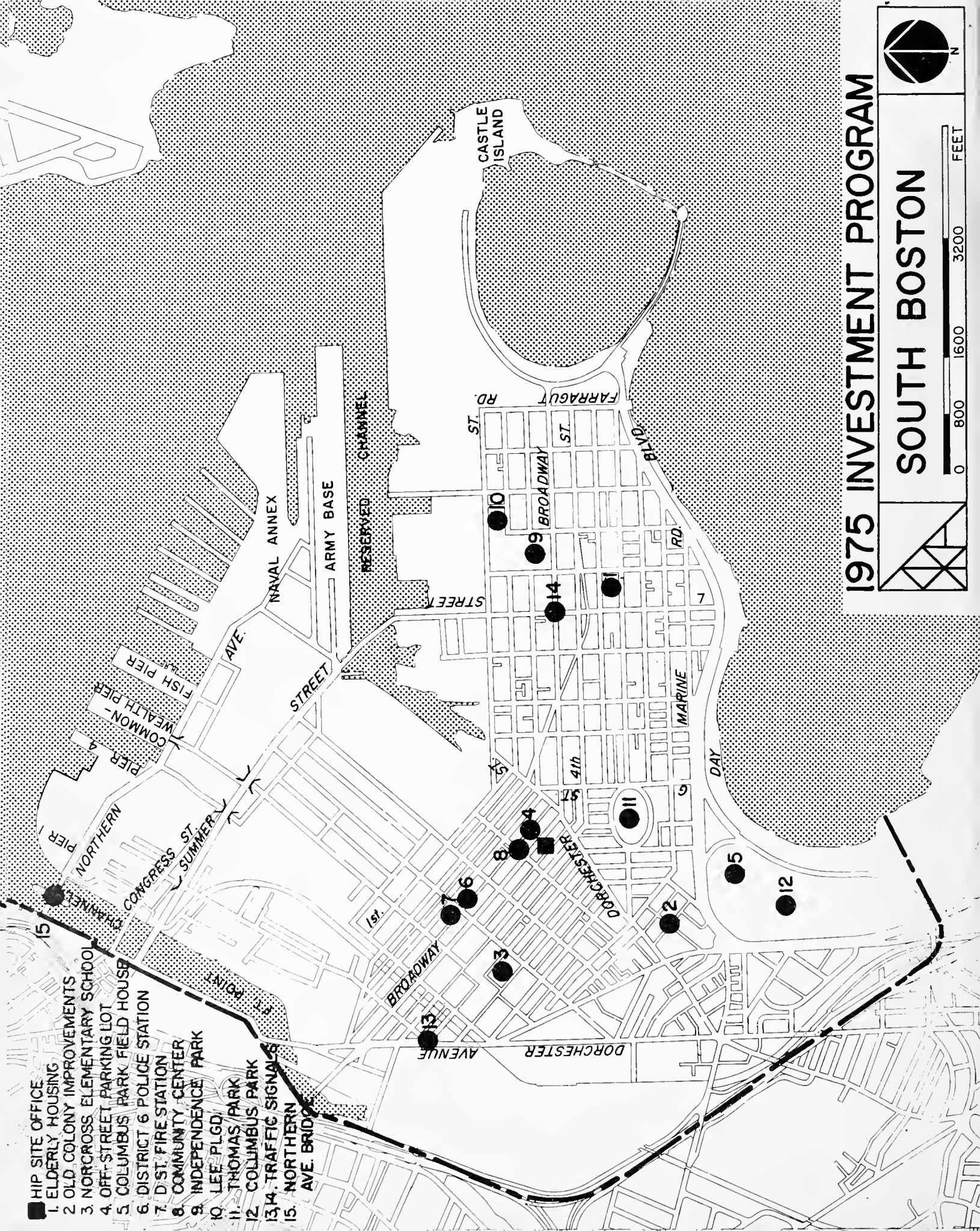
The 1975 program for South Boston includes investment in housing, public facilities, parks and recreational facilities, public works, and traffic and parking improvements. A central element of the housing investment program is the Housing Improvement Program, which provides rehabilitation incentive through each rebates to resident owners of buildings with 1-6 dwelling units. A site office for the administration of this program will be located in the South Boston Little City Hall, and funds have been reserved for the rehabilitation of approximately 100 residential buildings. Funds have also been set aside for the demolition of about 30 abandoned buildings and for the restoration of 30 vacant lots in South Boston. \$450,000 will be spent on repairs and improvements of the Old Colony housing project, and BHA of 6 residential units for the handicapped and 68 units of elderly housing.

The city is scheduled to spend over \$11,000,000 in 1975 on construction and rehabilitation of public facilities in South Boston including construction of the Norcross Elementary School (\$9,200,00), an off-street parking lot on West Broadway (\$700,000), the new D Street fire station (\$1,100,000), rehabilitation of the Columbus Park field house (\$40,000), and improvements to the District 6 Police Station (\$250,000). \$75,000 has also been set aside for first stage work on developing a new community center. The city will be doing restoration work on four parks in South Boston: Independence Park (\$135,000), Lee Playground (\$150,000), Thomas Park (\$160,000), and Columbus Park (\$180,000).

Public works improvement for South Boston includes improvements to streets, sidewalks, and water and sewer systems on over 25 streets. New traffic signals will be installed at the intersection of Dorchester Avenue, A and West Fifth Streets and at the intersection of East Broadway and L Street. \$1,000,000 will be spent on installing residential street lighting and \$110,000 on street lights for the East West Broadway business districts. 127 trees will be planted on residential streets in South Boston and 14 trees in the East Broadway business district. Additional trees will be planted as part of the off-street parking lot on West Broadway. Close to \$50,000 will be spent on a police foot patrol program for East and West Broadway commercial areas, and a similar program will be initiated to serve residential streets. \$14,000 will be spent for a mini-bus for elderly transportation. Repair of the Northern Avenue bridge is the major transportation improvement scheduled for 1975.

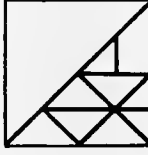
**HIP SITE OFFICE**

1. ELDERLY HOUSING
2. OLD COLONY IMPROVEMENTS
3. NORCROSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4. OFF-STREET PARKING LOT
5. COLUMBUS PARK FIELD HOUSE
6. DISTRICT 6 POLICE STATION
7. D ST. FIRE STATION
8. COMMUNITY CENTER
9. INDEPENDENCE PARK
10. LEE PLGD.
11. THOMAS PARK
12. COLUMBUS PARK
- 13, 14. TRAFFIC SIGNALS
15. NORTHERN AVE. BRIDGE



**1975 INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

**SOUTH BOSTON**





## F. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS

Future investment needs related to the preservation of housing stock include expansion of the Housing Improvement Program to assist the rehabilitation of 300 units a year, and development of a new program to provide more extensive assistance for low income homeowners in areas of concentrated deterioration. Major public investment is required to rehabilitate and maintain public housing projects in South Boston. City funds are required to continue and expand building demolition and vacant lot programs, and for capital investment in residential street improvements, street lighting and tree planting, the new community center, and for the construction of new open space and recreational facilities in the West Broadway area. Funds may also be required for necessary infrastructure improvements for new residential development.

Other investment needs include design and construction of the Seaport Access Road, the New Northern Avenue bridge and repair of the Summer Street railroad bridge, the Summer Street bridge over the Fort Point Channel, the West Fourth Street bridge, the Broadway bridge and the Dorchester Avenue bridge (connecting Boston to Dorchester).

In order to improve commercial areas, funds must be spent on additional street lighting, tree planting, and provision of street furniture, such as trash barrels and benches. To alleviate traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety, new traffic signals, bus shelters, neckdowns and median islands are needed. Public money should also be used to stimulate private investment by providing financial incentive for storefront rehabilitation.

In order to encourage appropriate private development of vacant and under utilized land, funds may be needed for infrastructure and other public improvements.

G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Residential Stability	Preservation of Housing Stock		
	HIP	HIP - \$100,000	HIP-minimum 300 units per year
	Deep rehabilitation assistance		Funds for deeper assistance
	Rehabilitate & maintain public housing projects	Rehabilitate Old Colony housing project - \$450,000	Bring projects up to code; regular maintenance; improved security measures
	Demolition of abandoned buildings which cannot be rehabilitated	Demolition of abandoned buildings - \$80,000	Funds for demolition
	Restoration, maintenance & disposition of vacant lots	Restoration of vacant lots - \$30,000; community garden permit and other vacant lot programs	Expansion of vacant lot, restoration, maintenance, disposition & community use programs
	Capital expenditure to strengthen neighborhood & resident confidence	Norcross Elem. School - \$9,200,000 D St. Fire Station - \$1,100,000 Community Center - \$75,000 Dist. 6 Police Station \$250,000 Columbus Park - \$180,000 Independence Park - \$135,000 Lee Playground - \$150,000 Thomas Park - \$160,000 Residential Lights - \$100,000	Residential street & sidewalk improvements including trees & lights additional funding for new community ctr. new open space & recreational facilities



G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Residential Stability (cont'd)		Street Improvements Residential Tree Planting - \$ 254,000 Police Foot Patrol Program	
	Control land use mix & building conversions		
	Increase availability of mortgage & home improvement money		
Incompatible Land Use	Encourage appropriate new residential devl.	BHA housing for elderly & handicapped - \$2,168,872	Transfer of city-owned land for new housing
	Control & redirect industrial expansion & prevent inappropriate uses in residential neighborhood		
Transportation	Remove truck traffic from residential sts		
	Improve truck access to existing & planned industrial areas		Design & construction of sea- port access road
	Repair or replace bridges as necessary	Repair Northern Ave. Bridge - \$300,000	Repair Summer Street railroad bridge, Summer St. bridge over Fort Point Channel, W, 4th St. bridge, Broadway bridge, Dorchester Ave. bridge  Replace Northern Ave bridge

G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Commercial Vitality	Assist local business organizations in commercial revitalization		Storefront rehab incentive funds
	Encourage reuse of vacant bldgs. & appropriate new devl. in Broadway commercial area		
	Study Andrew Sq. commercial area		
	Alleviate traffic congestion & access problems in commercial areas	Traffic light E. Broadway & L St. \$9,000 Off-St. parking lot \$700,000	Traffic signals, bus shelters neck downs, median islands
	Improve attractiveness and safety of Broadway commercial area	Street lights \$110,000 14 Trees \$ 3,000 Police Foot Ptl 50,000	Trees, street furniture & additional street lighting as necessary
Vacant & Underutilized Land	Encourage appropriate devl. of benefit to South Boston & the city		
	Make available information on vacant land to potential developers		

G. FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1975 Investment Program

Issue	Strategy	1975 Investment Program	Future Investment Needs
Vacant & Under-utilized Land	Coordinate provision of public facilities & services with new private development		Sewer, water, street improvements, other public facilities as necessary

